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ABSTRACT

This packet accompanies a slide series designed to introduce students to Japanese painting from the 12th century to the late 19th century. The packet includes an essay introduction to establish a historical framework, maps of the region, a time line of the chronology of Japan from 2000 B.C. to the present, illustrations of various art forms, a 17-item bibliography for further research, the slide list, slide descriptions and slide script. (EH)

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TEACHER'S PACKET

Japanese Painting: Form and Function

A Teacher Workshop on May 14, 1994

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INTRODUCTION

In this packet we will be examining the kinds of painting produced in Japan from the 12th century, the end of the Heian period, to the late 19th century, when the country opened its doors to the West. The focus is on the forms that painting took in Japan, both their format and style, and the functions they provided. Some are small intimate pictures meant for personal enjoyment or to be shared between a few, while others, often larger and more grand, were meant for more public display. Always there is the issue of presentation in this exceptionally aesthetic culture. This affects the mounting of the paintings, how they were hung, and the relationship of painting to architecture. Some paintings on walls assumed a permanent status as expressions of the purpose of the building or hall. Hanging scrolls and screens, on the other hand, were rotated with images often chosen for their appropriateness to the season, the kind of occasion, or even the weather. Fans were used by both men and women and often given as gifts. The paintings or decoration on their surfaces had to be carefully coordinated with the costume or occasion. Scrolls, particularly hanging scrolls, were mounted with backing paper and strips of exquisite textiles. The types and colors of mountings as well as the choice of material for the knobs on the end of the roller were of critical importance to the presentation of the painting as early as the 11th century, as we read in the "Picture Competition" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, a novel written in the 11th century by Murasaki Shikibu, a lady in waiting to the empress:

> The *Bamboo Cutter* illustration, by Kose no Omi with a caption by Ki no Tsurayuki, was mounted on cerise and had a spindle of sandalwood — rather uninteresting, all in all.
> "Now let us look at the other . . . This painting successfully blends the Chinese and the Japanese and the new and the old, and I say that it is without rival."
> On stiff white paper with a blue mounting and a spindle of yellow jade, it was the work of Tsunenori and bore a caption by Michikaze. The effect was dazzlingly modern (Seidenstecker, 312).

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

Before going into detail about the different periods of Japanese history, a brief overview of the stylistic shifts might be useful for an understanding of Japanese painting. Essentially, there were three periods of intense borrowing from mainland Asia, alternating with times when Japan was relatively isolated. During the first wave, from the 6th to 9th centuries, the budding civilization of Japan was almost completely engulfed by the introduction of the Buddhist religion and secular Chinese culture and institutions. These were thoroughly absorbed and modified into a refined, courtly, Japanese civilization in the following two centuries. A second wave, during the 13th and 14th centuries, initiated by the new military government of Japan, introduced Zen Buddhism and the art and techniques of ink painting to the country. These, too, were first borrowed wholesale and then altered to suit Japanese taste and artistic needs. Lastly, after the military government was established by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1615, the rulers again reached out to China for guidance in establishing an orthodox Confucian government and educational system for the elite. Along with this orthodoxy came the tradition of the independent scholar- gentlemen with its calligraphic style of ink painting. About this time Western knowledge also began to enter Japan, contributing an interest in realism to the variety of art styles practiced in the Edo period.

Within this general pattern, there were also less dramatic instances of cultural exchange and the continuous development of a diversity of styles. The initial influence from mainland Asia was particularly strong, as the civilization of the island kingdom of Japan developed later than that on the Asian continent. At the same time, it is important to remember that there had already evolved in Japan indigenous art forms, architecture, religious expression, and a royal social structure.

In A.D. 552, continental contact was made by means of a letter and a Buddhist image sent to the emperor of Japan from the Korean King of Paekche. Buddhism, which had its origins in India in the 6th century B.C. with the teachings of the historical Buddha, was by now a complex, metaphysical, international religion. Although the Buddha's original practice of meditation and the Eight-fold Path of Right Behavior remained central, an enlarged pantheon of Buddhas evolved: Buddhas of the past and future, Buddhas of the four directions, and other Buddhas with special realms of activity. The initial introduction of the written texts, paintings, and sculptural imagery of Buddhism through Korea was soon followed by additional material from China and eventually by the full force of Tang dynasty (618-906) culture.

In 645 the Japanese built a new capital at Nara, copying the city plan of China's capital at Chang-an (present Xi'an). At the north end of the regular grid plan oriented to the cardinal directions stood the imperial palace and administrative buildings, built with stone platforms, tile floors and roofs, and a wooden superstructure. For a time the Japanese eagerly imported and emulated both religious and secular paintings along with music, dance,

literature, and the institutions of the courts of China. This rapidly accelerated the development of the cultural arts in Japan. Initially, the temples were decorated with sculptures and paintings done by immigrant Chinese and Korean artisans with Japanese apprentices. The Japanese soon learned these arts. With regard to painting, they learned to use the Chinese brush and ink for writing, for iconographic drawing, and for outlining images and to employ the techniques of preparing and applying rich mineral colors to the images. Azurite and malachite were used for blue and green, cinnabar and red ochre for reds, and yellow ochre or litharge for yellow.

Few paintings survive from this early period; a small elegant picture of the Goddess of Fortune in the Yakushi temple in Nara demonstrates the fine "iron-wire" line and extensive palette of subdued colors embellished with accents of gold leaf that were used. The robust figure and loosely draped embroidered silks reflect the style of the Tang dynasty. This painting on silk is mounted as a hanging scroll. From some ancient pieces preserved in a special storehouse we know that single-panel and multi-panel screens were in use at this time, as were handscrolls, sewn books, and accordion-pleated books. These forms were introduced from China along with the Buddhist scriptures, Confucian treatises, and literature.

Not just the information, but the writing itself was learned from China. A close relationship exists between writing and painting in both China and Japan, as the same materials are used for both, at least in part. A look at how the Chinese characters were assimilated shows the difficulties the Japanese had in the adoption of Chinese culture. At first Chinese characters were adopted for writing both in Chinese and for transcribing the Japanese language. It was soon apparent that the large, blocky Chinese characters represented a whole word and were too cumbersome for writing the inflected, polysyllabic language of the Japanese. Consequently, *kana*, a phonetic syllabary of simpler forms was developed from abbreviated versions of some of the characters. Throughout the Nara (645-794) and Heian (794-1185) periods, the gentlemen of the court learned to read and write Chinese, while the reading and writing of Japanese in *hiragana*, the cursive form of *kana*, was practiced by the women. Even so, the women's style of writing was critically appreciated by court gentleman and *kana* was eventually used by everyone. Although at first it was not deemed worthy, it was the Japanese way and could not be forever resisted. The art of writing and the art of painting are often used together, and where *hiragana* is found we find an art that is most essentially Japanese.

Heian period (794-1185)

The process of full assimilation commenced in earnest in the 10th century, in the middle of the Heian period, when the fall of the Tang dynasty curtailed commerce with China. The capitol had been moved in the late 8th century from Nara to Heian-kyo (present Kyoto) in part to get away from the powerful Buddhist monasteries which had become too involved with political and secular affairs. Although this city also was laid out in a formal grid following the plan of the great Chinese city of Chang'an, the architecture of the Imperial Palace incorporated of the indigenous Japanese preferences. Wood was extensively used. The buildings were raised from the ground on wooden piers, instead of massive stone platforms; plank floors and shingled roofs replaced the tiles used in Chinese style buildings (see Slide 10). While the formal symmetrical arrangement of buildings was adhered to for the public audience halls and administrative buildings, in the private, residential section, the buildings were less rigidly symmetrical. With the use of sliding doors and partition walls, the rooms open up to the outside, and to one another, reflecting an appreciation of nature and of the momentary, changeable, and fleeting quality of life that we see repeatedly in the arts of Japan.

Buddhist Painting

Buddhist painting in the Heian period reflects the gradual Japanization of this foreign religion. First, new sects were introduced from China by Japanese monks who traveled to the continent and became attracted to the secret, esoteric sects that eschewed worldly and political life, while embracing intricate ritual practices that involved numerous images, magical implements, and the recitation of chants as the means to salvation. One of these sects, Shingon, is heavily imbued with Indian Hindu ideas and imagery. Mandalas, cosmic diagrams, display a cosmology of Buddhas of the four directions, their attendant deities and guardian figures. Many gods have both fierce and peaceful forms, some with multiple arms and faces. Fierce forms are surrounded by auras of purifying flames. The Japanese singled out and depicted some of these deities as special protectors, particularly the compassionate deity, Kannon, and the fierce subjugator of ignorance, Fudō. Kannon (Guanyin in China) was the principle bodhisattva of the Buddha of the West, Amida. A bodhisattva is an enlightened being who elects to remain on or near earth to help all sentient beings become enlightened. Amida, the Lord of Boundless Light, was worshipped separately in the Pure Land sect of Buddhism, which became very popular in the later Heian period. The Pure Land sect was a religion of hope and faith in which the devotees need only to call on the name of Amida to be saved and promised a place in his Western Paradise at death. Beatific, calm, and comforting images of Amida Buddha seated in meditation with attendant bodhisattvas and heavenly musicians and dancers were represented in painting and even sculpture. In a type of painting called a *raigō*, the Buddha and his entourage were shown descending over the landscape to the worshipper to welcome him or her into his paradise. Large scale *raigō* were meant for temple use but smaller simplified versions

of just Amida or Kannon could be taken by the priest to the bedside of the dying person (see Slides 1 and 2). Some aristocratic families even commissioned their own *raigō* paintings for this special use.

These sects and their imagery offered artists new forms of expression. While the iconography of the esoteric sects was firmly set, diverse range of images opened up the possibilities of expressiveness and imagination. The concepts of pantheons of deities existing in complex relationships to one another allowed the Japanese to form their own understanding of the Buddhist world and to make their own groupings of deities. This led to the eventual depiction of Shintō deities, called *kami* (see Slide 3). Shintō mandalas were created and a theory of *honji-suijaku*, or essence and manifestation, was put forth. In accordance with this theory, Buddhist gods were seen as manifestations of Shintō *kami*, sometimes hovering over a Shintō shrine. In this way the two religions were able to accommodate each other (see Slide 4).

Yamato-e

The Japanese used the techniques of painting on silk or paper with rich mineral colors learned in the process of making Buddhist icons for the creation of *yamato-e* or Japanese painting. Instead of the hieratic, symmetrical, self-contained, and full-bodied forms introduced by the Tang dynasty Chinese artists, the Japanese preference was for asymmetrical, personal, lithe, and anecdotal forms. Simplified and flattened images were layered or juxtaposed to one another to create compositional tension and sometimes ambiguity. In this period of courtly culture rich color harmonies and sumptuous decorative surfaces were employed in both religious and secular arts.

Yamato-e as used in scrolls and album paintings, which tell stories, displays some particular conventions. These include the use of obscuring cloud forms, "the blown-off roof," and a "bird's-eye view" perspective. Artists, challenged by the need to illustrate a story such as *The Tale of Genji*, in which much of the activity takes place inside the mansions of the characters, chose to take a "bird's-eye view" looking down into the scene at an angle. If a roof would have completely blocked the view, they made the artistic choice to omit it and let us look inside. They also represented figures according to conventions which gave them complete anonymity. Simplified features were barely suggested on the figures' white faces, a convention called "line-eye, angle-nose." It is believed that the very anonymity of the figures allowed those reading the story and looking at the pictures to project their own emotions onto the characters. They might have imagined the figures to be people they knew, perhaps even themselves.

The anonymity is reinforced by the way clothes were represented to give the figures abstract, blocky shapes with angular silhouettes. The gentlemen are dressed in starched jackets and billowing trousers. They wear black lacquered hats indicating their court rank. Women are dressed in many layers of flowing robes, in part to deal with the cold in the drafty houses. At the edges of the sleeves, hems, and front closure, the layers were visible. They were not clothes that were easy to get around in and indicate the

sheltered life of the courtiers, especially the women. Furthermore, these layered robes (12 was the standard number) provided the ladies of the court with one more vehicle to demonstrate their artistic taste (see Slide 12).

Artists working in the *yamato-e* style made spectacular design elements of these layered robes, playing with the shapes created by the heavy outer costume and the ribbons of color harmonies created by the layers at the sleeves and hems. The glory of the Heian woman was her streaming jet-black hair, which the artists also used to accent the design of the figures.

Narrative Art

Handscrolls of iconographic sketches of the different deities painted by the esoteric Buddhist sects in ink and transparent color on paper were instrumental in the development of handscrolls in the following periods. Some of these latter recorded secular data, such as dance poses and costumes (see Slide 5); a large number were narrative scrolls telling the stories of the founding of various religious establishments, Shintō as well as Buddhist; and episodes of history. Others illustrated the punishments in the Buddhist Hells and the plight of being reborn as a Hungry Ghost. The lively linework, expressive gestures, and vivid facial expressions create a visual momentum that carries the reader-viewer eagerly through the unfolding of the events or the gruesome lessons. Here is where the Japanese genius for the telling or anecdotal detail, that brings history or theology to life, shows itself. Common figures, who are depicted on the outskirts of historic events, are shown in dramatic and expressive postures. Settings are simplified to give maximum attention to the human activities. This category of painting arose in the late Heian period and blossomed in the following, Kamakura, period.

Kamakura (1195-1333) and Muromachi (1336-1573) Periods

The aristocratic period came to a close with a painful period of civil war which resulted in the first of a series of military governments, the Kamakura period (1185-1333). The city of Kamakura in Eastern Japan was the seat of the new government, far from the luxury-loving court life of Kyoto that had sapped the vitality of the imperial government. Minamoto Yoritoma, the first *shōgun*, or supreme general, established a military government, called *bakufu*, that was organized around absolute loyalty and obedience to the military hierarchy. Beneath the shogun were the *daimyō*, rulers of the various fiefdoms, and below them their loyal retainers, the *samurai*. The warrior culture was disciplined, self-reliant, and austere.

In the late 14th century, there was a shift in power in Japan, from the Kamakura shogunate to another military lineage, the Ashikagas, who ruled from Muromachi, a section of Kyoto. Because of the reopening of contact with the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in China by the third Ashikaga shogun, the culture of the Muromachi period (1336-1573) was strongly influenced by that of the Chinese scholar-gentleman.

Zen Buddhism and Chinese Culture

With the reopening of trade and communication with China, Japan was introduced to Zen Buddhism and the culture of the Southern Song (1127-1278) and Yuan (1278-1367) dynasties. "Zen" (*Dhyana* in Sanskrit, *Chan* in Chinese) means meditation. This form of Buddhism relied not on elaborate rituals or professions of faith for salvation, but on self cultivation and discipline which would lead to *satori*, sudden insight or enlightenment. The realistic and ascetic nature of this sect appealed to the warrior mentality. Japanese monks traveled to China to study and brought back the teachings and art forms associated with Zen. Chinese Zen monks followed and established temples and monastic communities in both Eastern Japan and the Kyoto area. There was a hiatus in contact with the continent in the second half of the 13th century due to the activities of the Mongols, who were invading China and Korea and who made two unsuccessful attempts to invade Japan. Limited contact was resumed with the establishment of the Mongol-dominated Yuan dynasty in the early 14th century.

The painting associated with Zen was an extension of the restrained, disciplined practices of monks in this essentially monastic form of Buddhism. Although there were portraits of patriarchs and arhats (ascetic masters) painted in fine line and subdued color, there was a much larger group of paintings in *suiboku*, water and ink, style. The early masters of *suibokuga*, ink painting with strong line work and broad areas of wash, were Zen monks. Paintings included a wide range of subjects imbued with the spirit of Zen, even when not iconographically religious. One of the literary Zen monk-scholars of the early 15th century brought back from his studies in China an appreciation for the unstudied and natural in art, an aesthetic that was later promoted by the masters of the *wabi*, humble, tea ceremony. Zekkai's phrase. "Great mastery is as if unskillful" was used by one of the monk-painters, Josetsu, as his artistic pseudonym. At first the painters worked on hanging scrolls and handscrolls with a didactic purpose, depicting simple images of the historical Buddha and the White Robed Kannon, the patriarchs of Zen, and certain outrageous characters who exemplified the penetrating insight that could see beyond the forms of the religion. Ox-herding pictures and certain monkey compositions illustrated favorite allegories (see Slide 7).

Less iconographic subjects which were also traditionally practiced by Zen monks included various subjects from nature such as birds and flowers, bamboo, orchids, and especially landscapes. One type of long, narrow hanging scroll with small landscape paintings, which included a modest building in a natural setting, an elderly scholar climbing a path, and a hazy view of distant peaks was a subject favored subject of poem-painting collaborations. Monks caught up in the busy life of the large, urban monasteries yearned for the life of a hermit. These small paintings were hung in an alcove of the monks' modest quarters where they served as a vehicle for escape through contemplation. Some were painted in the more detailed brushwork and washes while a few were depicted in *haboku*, or splashed-ink style, in which the landscape was evoked with a few bold strokes with a

saturated brush, pale washes, and a few accent lines (see Slide 8).

The Secularization of Suibokuga and the Kanō School

In the later 14th century, under the Ashikaga shoguns, trade with Ming dynasty China increased. The arts of poetry, calligraphy, tea, and monochrome ink painting were avidly patronized by the military elite. It provided a legitimizing cultural base for these warriors, their answer to the imperial and aristocratic culture. Although essentially secular in nature, these arts were still transmitted through the auspices of the Gozan, the five great Zen establishments in Kyoto.

By the end of 15th century, the *suibokuga* tradition became fully secularized, first through the decoration of the wall panels in the monastic buildings and then with monk and lay painters using the style to paint the wall panels and screens for the mansions of the ruling elite. Japanese architecture with its sliding wall panels (*fusuma*) had provided artists with large surfaces for painting since at least the Heian period as we know from the 12th century scroll paintings of *The Tale of Genji*. No *fusuma* or screens remain from the early period, but there are many preserved from the Muromachi period in the Zen temples and private collections. As secular painters began to work in the style it naturally became not only less spiritual in essence, but also less Chinese. The change was effected in large part by the Kanō lineage of painters. The Kanō artists generally reduced the number of elements in a composition, and brought them close to the picture surface where they were more immediately engaging by simplifying and flattening the forms. A favorite device was a large, truncated tree near one edge of the composition. When painted on screens, these asymmetrical, one-corner compositions were paired to bracket large areas of misty space and smaller landscape elements, flowers, or birds. By the 15th century, the great Zen monk-painter Sesshu had added color to the ink painting style, in light wash or more intense accents. Used decoratively by Kanō School artists, ink and color created an appropriate style for the large, showy mansions of the period.

There was a literal and stylistic marriage between the Kanō School with its strong ink brushwork, and the Tosa School, preservers of the detailed and intensely colorful *yamato-e* style. This combination of ink, gold backgrounds and clouds, and bright colors produced a style completely suited rival warlords' need for ostentation as they vied for power and land in the 100 year period of civil war, the Sengoku (ca. 1500-1573) that brought the Muromachi period to a close.

Momoyama Period (1573-1615) and Edo Period (1615-1868)

The Kanō school did not have a complete monopoly on the market at this time. Other individual artists in the *suibokuga* tradition painted during this period, and although they left their mark, they did not establish lasting lineages. Among them were Hasegawa Tōhaku, Kaihō Yūshō, and Unkoku Tōgan. Like the Kanō artists, these painters were masters of ink alone, ink with light color, or ink outline with brilliant colors on a gold ground. Their originality, strength, and boldness were also popular with the powerful *daimyō* and *samurai* of the later Muromachi and Momoyama (1573-1615) periods. Followers in the styles of these masters include the painter of the *fusuma* paintings, now mounted as large hanging scrolls, of monkeys playing in oak trees (see Slide 11).

Tosa artists painting for the aristocracy had preserved the brilliant court style of the Heian period, with its use of gold and color. Themes of their pictures followed those of the earlier *yamato-e* tradition, illustrating classical literature, seasonal flowers, and activities of the seasons, themes that related directly to native Japanese concerns. Albums or screens with these colorful images of small scale figures in scenes separated by glittering gold clouds continued to be popular not just with the aristocracy but also with the wealthy merchant class that allied with them. Illustrations for *The Tale of Genji*, which were always in demand, were formally codified and recorded in a manuscript of the 15th century. Thus, the very abbreviated scenes with standard figure types could be identified by the particular groupings, the architectural and landscape details, and the various accouterments (see Slide 12).

The Rimpa School

This period of civil strife brought with it tremendous social upheaval. Although there was war and bloodshed, there was also social mobility and economic opportunity. Besides the aristocracy and military elite there were many wealthy townsmen, the *machishu*, and a class of craftsmen and artists who catered to them. Out of this group there emerged a pair of artists who were responsible for establishing a new tradition of art. Like that of the Tosa School, their art was based on the old Heian arts, but unlike the artists of the traditional school, these artists were able to reinterpret the styles more freely. Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637) was a connoisseur of swords, a calligrapher, potter, and book designer. Tawaraya Sōtatsu (act. 16th-17th century) was a painting restorer, paper decorator, and fan painter. Each sought to revive elements of the past, and together they collaborated on a number of scrolls of ancient poems, written in elegant Japanese *hiragana* script on richly decorated papers. In none of the scrolls they produced do the images on the paper illustrate the poetry. The two art forms are layered, one played out in juxtaposition to the other. Each has its own rhythm and as they flow along together they sometimes intersect and sometimes diverge (see Slide 13).

Even in his early fan-shaped paintings which were mounted on

screens, and especially in his larger screen paintings, Sōtatsu's style was bold and dramatic, often magnifying images from earlier art and arranging them in striking compositions. His compositional strength was revived in the paintings of another artist, Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716), 100 years later. The style of this later master, who was born into a period of peace and affluence, is more graceful and less startlingly bold than that of his forerunners. However, like them, he was a professional artist who worked primarily for the aristocracy and wealthy merchant clients producing works in a number of genres from large screen paintings to fans and decorative papers (see Slide 14).

From the syllable "*rin*" in his name this kind of bold decorative painting became known as the Rimpa School. This is not a school in the traditional sense of a lineage like the Kanō School, but is rather a loose collection of artists who periodically rework the evocative, decorative aspects of Japanese art on a bold scale. Watanabe Shikō (1683-1755) studied with Kōrin and promoted the style into the next generation (see Slide 15). Sakai Hōitsu (1761-1828) was its last great adherent. In general, the Rimpa style is recognized by strongly asymmetrical compositions, borderless flow of form, and a bold juxtaposition of elements with reserved, evocative space. Not only in their painting, but also in the decorative arts of pottery and lacquer, the early artists experimented with their materials, enjoying the interplay between process and product. For instance, Sōtatsu pioneered the use of *tarashikomi*, a wet-on-wet painting technique. Kōetsu added a slab of dull lead to elegant gold and silver decorated lacquer.

The civil war period came to an end with the military genius of three men, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Their military might and strategic acumen forged the unity necessary for peace in the land. As we have noticed, the period when they were subjugating the rival *daimyō* was one of unprecedented social, economic, and artistic freedom, producing the dramatic styles of the Momoyama period. A portrait of Hideyoshi, captures some of the grandiose richness of the period (see Slide 9). The figure, dressed in the formal white robes of the highest ranking minister of the court, sits on a raised mat in front of a heavy curtain which has been pulled aside to expose a typical Momoyama period wall painting. Above him we see the elaborately structured and painted ceiling of a hall of state. There is a long tradition of formal portraits in the *yamato-e* style of opaque colors and fine line in which the simplified, almost abstract rendering of the formally clothed body contrasts with a finely drawn, realistic face. In the Shintō religion this portrait type was used to depict the *kami* of the clan in ancestral shrines (see Slide 3).

The Edo period was founded by the last of the three, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616). There is a saying that Nobunaga mixed the cake, Hideyoshi baked the cake, and Ieyasu ate the cake. The Tokugawa, or Edo period, so named because the capitol was situated in Edo (present Tokyo), was the last of the great military eras. A 200-year period of peace was enforced with a strictly controlled class system and by isolating the country from foreign intervention. In order to curb their wealth and power, Ieyasu ordered the provincial *daimyō* to spend half of the year in Edo, maintaining

appropriately lavish quarters and leaving their families in the city as hostages when they went to their home provinces. The extravagant lifestyle of these feudal lords prevented them from establishing military forces and promoted the development of the arts and crafts. Scrolls, screens, and *fusuma* were painted by members of the Kano, Tosa, and Rimpa Schools. The latter two also produced albums, fans, and paintings on small sheets called *shikishi*. Although sumptuary laws were passed to prevent the rising middle class from putting on airs, these patrons found ways to embellish their lives with paintings and other luxury goods.

The Maruyama-Shijō School

New modes of painting were added to these already established schools. Two styles were inspired by the trickle of Chinese and Western ideas that were entering the country through Nagasaki, the one legitimate trading port located on the southern island of Kyushu. Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), a Kano School trained artist, was inspired by the realism of the few Western pictures, mostly book illustrations and prints, that made it into limited circulation. He encouraged his students to carefully observe and sketch all forms of nature and to construct their ink paintings from the knowledge they gained. Although his paintings are far from photographic realism, there is a greater depth of space and solidity of form achieved through more descriptive, brushwork. The school is called the Maruyama-Shijō school as the style was expanded by the work of Matsamura Goshun (1752-1811), a student of Ōkyo's who painted in the Shijō district of Edo. His work combines the techniques and realism of Ōkyo with the poetic vision of the poet-painter Yosa Buson (see below) with whom he also studied. In this eclectic period, the school not only attracted and trained painters who carried on the style in the traditional manner, but also independent artists who went on to forge their own styles. One of these was Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891), a trained lacquer artist who was encouraged to study painting by his master. The results of his close observations and sketches of nature can be seen in his designs on lacquer wares as well as in his paintings in lacquer (see Slide 20).

Nanga Painting

Nanga painting was another new trend at this time. It was inspired by the Chinese scholar painting of what is called the "southern school" of Chinese painting, or *nanga* in Japanese. Like the Rimpa School, this is not a lineage of artists but a loose collection of individual painters who were influenced by the Chinese tradition of independent scholar-painters and who followed the Chinese styles more or less closely. *Nanga* style is identified by its brush strokes that have their origin in calligraphy, the various strokes practiced by the man of letters in the act of writing. Forms are built up from numerous strokes, sometimes applied in predetermined patterns. The goals of the school are neither descriptive nor decorative but philosophically evocative and expressive of the literateness and individuality of the painter. The style eschews beauty for meaning, and drama for balance and harmony. The Japanese *suiboku* artists, whose paintings are characterized by sometimes

long descriptive ink lines and the heavy use of broad washes, had been following an older and, as it turned out, a professional style of Chinese painting which the Chinese scholar looked down on.

There were a few Chinese painters who came to Japan and stayed a while, teaching some Japanese painters directly, but most artists learned from copying examples of Chinese paintings, if they could see them, or using the painting manuals. The numerous texture strokes of Chinese scholar painting were codified and published as painting manuals in China in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). One of the most influential of these was the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*, printed in China in 1679 and in a Japanese edition in 1848. As the manuals were more accessible than original Chinese paintings for many artists, they became the major source of inspiration and training for Japanese *nanga* painters. The woodblock printed reproductions of Chinese painting in the books tended to flatten the groups of strokes used for different patterns. These flat groups of strokes seen in the work of some Japanese painters seem also to correspond to the native Japanese aesthetic. The style was practiced by a growing number of artists of different backgrounds from the 18th to 19th centuries. Yosa Buson (1716-83) was from a family of wealthy farmers (see Slides 16 and 17). He was an active and successful *haiku* poet before turning to painting, and his style reflects his particular lyrical sensibilities. Okada Hankō (1782-1846) was in service to a *daimyō* before retiring to devote himself to his painting (see Slide 18). Yamamoto Baiitsu (1783-1856) was from the family of a skilled woodcarver and was trained to be an artist from the time he was a young boy. His style combines the more professional bird-and-flower painting of China with the literati style (see Slide 19). For the most part *nanga* artists were individualists who studied various schools of painting and developed their own independent styles.

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JAPAN

JAPAN

□ Modern Cities

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JAPAN

2000

JOMON PERIOD

Bronze Age

250 B.C.

YAYOI PERIOD
(c.a. 250 B.C.–A.D. 250)

0

A.D. 250

OLD TOMBS PERIOD
(250-552)

552

ASUKA PERIOD
(552-645)

645

NARA PERIOD
(645-794)

794

HEIAN PERIOD
(794-1185)

1185

KAMAKURA PERIOD
(1185-1333)

1333

NAMBOKUCHŌ PERIOD (1333-1392)

1392

MUROMACHI PERIOD
(1392-1573)

1573

MOMOYAMA PERIOD (1573-1615)

1615

EDO PERIOD
(1615-1868)

1868

MODERN PERIOD
(1868-Present)

CHRONOLOGY OF JAPAN
c.a. 2000 B.C.-Present

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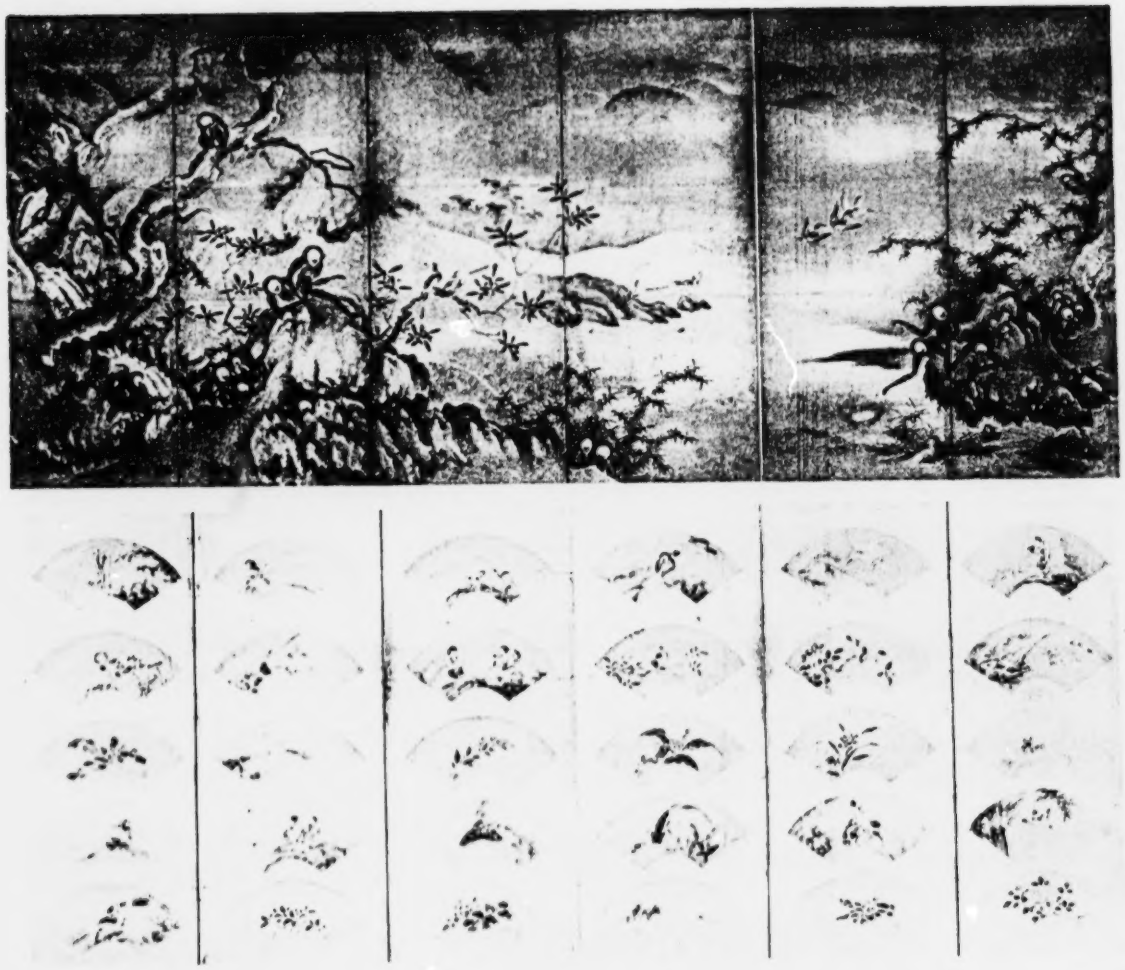
Figure 1. MONJU (MANJUSRI) Iconographic sketch
Hanging scroll, ink on paper 1991.55
The small characters tell the artist to fill in the drawing with particular colors: White body, Red skirt, bluegreen with lighter shading for the scarves tying the top of skirt and draped over shoulder, and Blue lotus petals You can follow these directions or use your own color scheme.



LANDSCAPE WITH MONKEYS
Shikibu Terutada (fl. mid 16th century)
Six panel screen, ink and gold on paper

Figure 3. FAN-SHAPED PAINTINGS ON SCREEN
Shikibu Terutada (fl. mid 16th century)
Six panel screen, ink and gold on paper

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Figure 2. BUGAKU
Tawaraya Sotatsu (d. ca. 1640)
Two panel screen, ink, colors, and gold on paper

Figure 4. POEM AND CALLIGRAPHY
inscription by Gichiku Shurin (fl. 16th century)
on landscape painting by Soga Sojo 1991.63

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JAPANESE PAINTING: FORM AND FUNCTION

SLIDE LIST

1. **Eleven-headed Kannon**
   Hanging scroll,
   ink and colors on silk
   Late Kamakura period,
   14th century
   H: 153.5 cm W: 45.0 cm
   1991.56

2. **Eleven-headed Kannon** (detail)
   1991.56

3. **Appearance of Kasuga Myōjin (Departure from Kashima)**
   Hanging scroll,
   ink and colors on silk
   Late Kamakura-Muromachi period, 14th century
   H: 92.8 cm W: 39.3 cm
   1991.58

4. **Kasuga Honjibutsu Mandala (Five Buddhist Avatars of the Kasuga Gods Descending over the Kasuga Shrine)**
   Hanging scroll,
   ink and colors on silk
   Muromachi period, 15th century
   H: 85.2 cm W: 37.3 cm
   1991.59

5. **Bugaku Dancers Scroll**
   Abe no Suhide, 1391-1411
   Hand scroll,
   ink and colors on paper
   Muromachi period, dated 1408
   H: 28.2 cm W: 473.4 cm
   1991.60

6. **Bugaku Performance**
   Nara
   © Photo by M. Schardt

7. **Monkey**
   Shikibu Terutada,
   act. mid-16th century
   Fan (mounted as hanging scroll),
   ink and gold on paper
   Muromachi period, 14th century
   H: 36.8 cm W: 57.1 cm
   1988 45
   Gift of Mr. and Mrs. M. Glenn Vinson, Jr.

8. **Splashed-ink Landscape** (detail)
   Soga Shōjō, act. 1490-1512?
   Hanging scroll, ink on paper
   Muromachi period,
   late 15th-early 16th century
   H: 71.6 cm W: 9.3 cm
   1991.63

9. **Portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi**
   Hanging scroll,
   ink and colors on silk
   Inscription by Seishō Shōtai
   Momoyama period, dated 1599
   H: 90.7 cm W: 37.8 cm
   1991.61

10. **Fusuma panel**
    Imperial Palace
    Kyoto
    © Photo by M. Schardt

11. **Monkeys Playing on Oak Branches**
One of a pair of hanging scrolls, ink and colors on paper
Edo period
H: 177.5 cm W: 138.4 cm
1991.62.1-2

12. **The Tale of Genji Screen**
(detail of two panels)
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink,colors, and gold on paper
Edo period, early 17th century
Each: H: 93.0 cm W: 271.0 cm
1991.65.1-2

13. **Sixteen Poems from the *Shin Kokin Wakashū***
Calligraphy by Hon'ami Koëtsu, 1558-1637
Papers designed by Tawaraya Sōtatsu, d. ca. 1640
Handscroll, ink and mica on paper
Edo period, early 17th century
H: 22.8 cm W: 570.0 cm
1991.64

14. **Morning Glories**
(incense wrapper)
Ogata Kōrin, 1658-1716
Hanging scroll,
ink, colors, and gold on silk
Edo period, 18th century
H: 26.6 cm W: 21.1 cm
1991.79

15. **Flowering Plants and Fruits of the Four Seasons**
Watanabe Shikō, 1683-1755
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper
Edo period, 18th century
Each: H: 154.5 cm
W: 352.0 cm
1991.54.1-2

16. **West Lake in Spring**
Yosa Buson, 1716-83
Hanging scroll,
ink and colors on silk
Edo period, 18th century
H: 133.2 cm W: 62.5 cm
1991.80

17. **West Lake in Spring**
(detail)
1991.80

18. **Autumn Landscapes**
Okada Hankō, 1782-1846
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink and colors on paper
Edo period, dated 1837
Each: H: 118.0 cm
W: 284.4 cm
1991.67.1-2

19. **Flowers and Birds**
Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1783-1856
Six-panel screen,
ink and colors on paper
Edo period, dated 1843
H: 156.3 cm W: 358.6 cm
1991.68

20. **Various Themes**
Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891)
Album leaf, lacquer on paper
Edo-Meiji period, 19th century
H: 22.6 cm W: 18.0 cm
B65 D5

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JAPANESE PAINTING: FORM AND FUNCTION

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS

1. **Eleven-headed Kannon**
   Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
   Late Kamakura period, 14th century
   H: 153.5 cm W: 45.0 cm 1991.56

This Buddhist painting shows the compassionate god Kannon showering blessings on the small, kneeling worshipper beneath him. Depicted in gold paint and decorated with cut gold foil, the luminous figure of the deity has a golden halo which radiates beams of golden light. He descends to the earthly realm out of the blue, hovering just above the now-faded landscape with cliffs and a long waterfall to the right of the figure. The image is meant to capture the sense of hope and comfort promised by the Pure Land sect of Buddhism to those who call out in faith to Amida Buddha or, as here, to the Bodhisattva Kannon. The gentleness of the figure is evoked by the three-quarter view and the figure's relaxed stance with his weight shifted slightly to one foot. His lowered right hand is held in the gesture of generosity with the palm outward. In his right hand he holds a special bottle, a *kundika*, of holy water.

The deity Kannon, known as Avalokitesvara in India and Guanyin in China, is a kind of god known as a bodhisattva, enlightened beings who choose to remain on or near to earth to help all sentient beings — that is all members of the animal kingdom, not just humans — become enlightened. They can be seen as intermediaries between earthly creatures and the more remote gods, the fully realized Buddhas. Kannon is the principle bodhisattva associated with Amida Buddha and, as the embodiment of compassion, the most popular. The Eleven-headed Kannon is able to watch out for beings in all directions. In this image ten heads are arranged as a crown above the primary one. The "jewel" placed at the front of crown is the figure of Amida Buddha.

Paintings showing Amida Buddha, known as the "Lord of Boundless Light," or his bodhisattvas descending to greet or bless the faithful are called *raigo*. Kannon was said to rule over the Potalaka Paradise. The cult of this mountain paradise, full of beautiful trees, fragrant flowers, and flowing streams, became popular in Japan during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) and many temples were identified with it.

At the top and bottom of the painting itself are borders of silk with figures of birds and lotuses painted in green and blue and highlighted with cut gold leaf against a blue ground. These panels are part of the painting meant to look like a mounting. Around the whole is a more recent mounting of tan and gold silk.

2. **Eleven-headed Kannon** (detail) 1991.56

Close inspection reveals the beautiful, detailed work that was lavished on the image of Kannon, a sacred figure. The intricate patterns of the god's robes were created in a technique known as *kirikane*, or cut gold. Sheets of gold leaf were delicately cut into a variety of geometric patterns and applied over the gold-painted figure. Descriptively, these patterns represent the elaborately woven or embroidered textiles which the gods were presumed to wear. But the way they are applied—in flat patterns that do not follow the folds in the cloth or curvature of the body—gives them an abstract life of its own, flattening and denying the three dimensionality of the those elements. This sort of layering and juxtaposition are two characteristic features of Japanese aesthetics. Another layer of gold and mineral pigments accents the ornate jewelry worn by the god. The diaphanous gold scarf, loosely draped over the god's arm seems to become a shower of gold descending from his outstretched palm down toward the supplicating figure below.

3. **Appearance of Kasuga Myōjin (Departure from Kashima)**
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
Late Kamakura-Muromachi period, 14th century
H: 92.8 cm W: 39.3 cm 1991.58

Before Buddhism arrived in Japan, the native Japanese religion was Shintō, the way of the gods. Shintō gods were of two types: deified ancestors and the spirits of the land — of mountains, trees, and waterfalls. The native Shinto gods were not originally represented in painting or sculpture. The adoption of Buddhism brought with it the use of elaborate imagery and ritual which temporarily overshadowed the native cults. Under the influence of Buddhism, however, images of Shintō deities began to be made. In the late Heian (794-1185) period, the Shintō-Buddhist unification theory (*honji-suijaku*) arose in which Shintō deities were associated with different Buddhist gods, producing a new kind of eclectic Shintō imagery.

This painting represents the deified ancestor of the Fujiwara clan seated on a sacred stag. He is leaving the Kashima Shrine in the homeland of the Fujiwaras in 768 for Mount Mikasa near Nara, the capitol, accompanied by two of his descendants. (This religious event is full of political overtones.) Behind him are Shintō holy objects: the *sakaki* tree with five strips of specially folded paper (*gohei*) and a mirror. Painted on the mirror are five of the *honji-suijaku* figures, Shinto gods in the form of Buddhist deities.

Although the format of a scroll painting was borrowed from the Buddhist arts that had come from China, the painting style here is *yamato-e*, or Japanese painting. Typical of this style are the horizontal bands of clouds in the upper portion which partly obscure the background, the simple sinuous line defining the contour of the land, and the asymmetrical arrangement of the figures. Shown in Japanese court attire, the figures wear stiffly starched robes, billowing pants, and small black lacquered hats. The old man who

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wears a bright orange robe and black and silver pants carries a ceremonial scepter to indicate his rank and authority.

At first, all worship took place at the sacred shrine, the home of the deity; in time, smaller shrines were built in residences where worship could take place. As the Kasuga cult became more popular during the Kamakura and Muromachi (1392-1573) periods, votive paintings like this one were created as symbolic versions of the shrine to be used for worship at home or when traveling. Traveling priests also used votive paintings to propagate the cult in the outlying provinces.

The unusual mounting of this painting blends harmoniously with it in color and spirit. The inner mounting is of off-white silk with painted images of birds and butterflies. The simple gold tendrils on the outer mounting of pure white silk are also painted.

4. **Kasuga Honjibutsu Mandala (Five Buddhist Avatars of the Kasuga Gods Descending over the Kasuga Shrine)**
   Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
   Muromachi period, 15th century
   H: 85.2 cm W: 37.3 cm 1991.59

Here we have a closer look at the five Shintō deities of the Kasuga cult in their Buddhist forms. They hover gracefully over the gentle Japanese landscape shown below as a pine-clad spot of land with strolling deer and a red gate, and above in rounded mountain tops (the highest being Mount Mikasa), cloud shrouded valleys, and waterfalls all accented by a bright red sun. These landscape elements identify the place as the Kasuga Shrine: the red gate, called a *torii*, and the rising sun are symbolic of Shintōism; the deer are emblems of the Fujiwara ancestors; and the dome of Mount Mikasa indicates the place.

This Shintō votive painting is closer in feeling and style to Buddhist *raigō* paintings than the previous painting (see Slide 3). The entourage of heavenly Buddhist deities, resplendent in glittering gold, standing on lotus blossoms, and gliding through the atmosphere on clouds, all recall the *raigo* paintings of Pure Land Buddhism. Whereas Buddhist paintings often are hierarchically structured with a more or less symmetrical arrangement and important figures shown larger, here the figures are presented as equals in a balanced, but not symmetrical, arrangement.

The Eleven-headed Kannon here is seen as the equivalent of Himegami, a female Shinto deity. Monju, Buddhist god of wisdom (see Fig. 1), who carries a sword and a scroll, represents the Shintō Wakamiya, god of youth and the new.

The painting is richly presented in a mounting of brocades and a medium blue silk. The narrow brocade bands directly above and below the painting are particularly bold with a pattern of gold plovers and lotuses against a dark blue ground. The mounter chose these fabrics to echo some of the qualities of the painting while also making an independent aesthetic statement.

5. **Bugaku Dancers Scroll**
Abe no Suhide, 1391-1411
Hand scroll, ink and colors on paper
Muromachi period, dated 1408
H: 28.2 cm W: 473.4 cm 1991.60

This image, one of several depicted on a long horizontal handscroll in ink and colors on paper, shows elaborately costumed and masked dance figures in characteristic poses. The mask has a long nose and bulging eyes. The articulated lower jaw piece includes a long gray beard. Above his green hair which stands on end is the figure of a gaping dragon. The dancer wears a costume composed of a red shirt, apron, and long train; pants of a paler red brocade material; and a fringed, embroidered vest.

While the hanging scroll, *kakemono*, was the most versatile and frequently chosen format for painting, the handscroll, *makimono*, was also employed for paintings. Sutra scrolls with text and frontispiece illustrations were introduced from China along with Buddhism. There were also scrolls with iconographic drawings, patterns showing costumes, postures and symbolic accouterments for the correct depiction of the multitude of Buddhist figures. This scroll of Bugaku dancers was created in the spirit of these latter scrolls.

Both the artist and the patron were aristocracts with intimate knowledge of the dance form represented. Abe no Suehide was a keeper of the imperial treasures, in charge of their whereabouts and condition. The patron was a musician in the Imperial Household. In his inscription on the scroll, he tells how he worked with the artist who came to his home several times to do the painting.

This kind of scroll was designated a "secret scroll." Its purpose was documentary, not decorative. It recorded the figures in their characteristic poses and costumes and was not meant for decoration. Nevertheless, Bugaku dance, along with other traditional subjects like *The Tale of Genji*, were popular themes in later painting—dance scenes appear on screens, fans, and lacquer ware. Due to the conservative nature of Japanese culture with its respect for the past, artists often looked to older art for the source of their images. Later court painters had access to scrolls like this one and used them as a source of imagery. Sotatsu, for example, a craftsman and painter of the 16th century (see Slide 13), gained access to scrolls such as this in the process of restoring many old works of art. In a well known two-panel screen he placed a few of these figures, greatly enlarged, against a plain, gold ground to stunning effect (see Fig. 2).

Bugaku is a systematized conglomeration of various dances from Asia, first collected from various cultural and folk traditions by the Tang court of China in the 8th century. At that time it was introduced to Japan where the dances became yet more formalized. With the collapse of the Tang dynasty in the 10th century, the tradition came to an end in China but is preserved as a formal entertainment by the Japanese court and a ceremonial performance by the great shrines of Japan even today.

6. **Bugaku Performance**
Nara
© Photo by M. Schardt

Five hundred years after Suehide painted the dance scroll, we see that this ancient dance tradition continues. This outdoor performance was held in 1985 as part of the festivities of the holiday season in early May. The orchestra, not visible here, is seated on straw mats under the large spreading tree above the lake. The dance platform projects out from the shore into the lake. With its red railing and striped skirt it is appropriately formal and festive. The audience is informally gathered on the grass around the different sides of the lake.

Notice how closely the costume of the dancer recalls the one in the painting. We have the same baggy, patterned pants, red shirt and fringed brocade vest. The long-nosed, bug-eyed mask is surmounted by a gaping dragon head. In imperial or shrine performances, many of the masks and costumes worn today are the well maintained originals. Tradition and preservation are very important to the Japanese (which does not mean that they were not also, always, very interested in the most up-to-date and modern forms of art and technology).

7. **Monkey**
Shikibu Terutada, act. mid-16th century
Fan (mounted as hanging scroll), ink and gold on paper
Muromachi period, 14th century
H: 36.8 cm W: 57.1 cm 1988.45
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. M. Glenn Vinson, Jr.

In this fan painting, a monkey in deep concentration is lying on a rock overlooking a cascading stream. One arm grasps the rock while the other supports his chin as he looks down at the falling water. Bamboo grows behind the rocks above him. Unlike the colorful paintings we have been looking at, this picture is painted in ink of different shades of black and gray. A light wash of gold gives a warm glow to the paper, but does not help define the image.

The painting dates from the 16th century, near the end of the Muromachi period. Ever since writing and painting had been introduced from China, in the 6th century, the Japanese had been using the Chinese brush and ink for writing and drawing. Most painting, however, was sketched in ink and then carefully colored in with rich mineral colors in *yamato-e* , or Japanese style painting. Meanwhile in China, scholar-artists had been creating paintings solely with brush and ink. These paintings, especially those by painters associated with the Chan (Zen in Japan) Buddhist tradition, were imported to Japan starting in the late 12th century. Increased trade with China in the 13th and 14th centuries brought about a

second wave of Chinese influence on the art and culture of Japan which inspired many Japanese artists to use the brush and ink in the Chinese style, called *suibokuga* in Japan.

Shikibu Terutada was a painter who worked in Eastern Japan, the center of the earlier Kamakura shogunate, which was still ruled by a powerful military family during Terutada's lifetime. He appears to have had some training as a monk and remained associated with Buddhist temples in the area. He also had some training in the Kanō school. A family of secular painters, the founders of the Kanō School, popular with the warrior class, created a style which combined the ink painting of the Zen monasteries with the more immediate and decorative tendencies of Japanese art.

This fan-shaped painting was probably never used as a fan as it has no creases where it would have been folded in accordion fashion when not in use. We know that this was one of several fans, a few others also with monkeys, painted by Terutada and mounted decoratively on a pair of screens (see Fig. 3). Only recently were the screens cut apart, and the fans, now mounted as hanging scrolls, sold separately to collectors.

8. **Splashed-ink Landscape** (detail)
Soga Sōjō, act. 1490-1512?
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
Muromachi period, late 15th-early 16th century
H: 71.6 cm W: 9.3 cm 1991.63

This detail of a small splashed-ink landscape painting shows all of the painting proper, but reveals only about a third of the paper's length. Not illustrated here is an inscription in graceful Chinese characters at the top of the painting, above a stretch of evocative open space (see Fig. 4). The energetic brushwork suggests, rather than describes, foreground, middle distance, and far distant peaks. Composed of the towering mountains found in Chinese landscapes, this painting is executed in firm, dark strokes, showing the broken lines of the stiff bristles of the brush and contrasting soft, graded washes of paler wet ink that suggest dense, rocky promontories, distant mountains, and misty valleys. A few horizontal and vertical strokes indicate a pavilion or temple midway up the middle peak. A man and his servant sketched in dark ink make their way along a mountain path in the foreground.

In *haboku*, or splashed-ink painting, the artist paints swiftly with firm, vigorous strokes to capture spontaneously the essence of the form and the mood of the landscape. This technique evolved in the Southern Song period in China and was popular with Chan Buddhist painters. It was brought to Japan with Chan (Zen in Japan) Buddhism where it was practiced primarily by the temples' monk-painters, with greater of lesser success. "Success," Yoko Woodson points out, "is determined by the delicate balance between

the artist's premeditated plan and the fortuitous effects of the execution" (Woodson, 78). According to Zen thought, this could only be achieved, like enlightenment, from disciplined practice leading to a sudden moment of insight, rather than through carefully reasoned dialogue or accomplished descriptive brushwork.

Soga Sōjō was in the employ of a provincial nobleman and like his master studied Zen Buddhism under Ikkyū, an astute and demanding Zen master of the late 15th century. The master lived and taught in a sub temple of the powerful Rinzai temple complex of Daitokuji in Kyoto. Soga Sōjō painted *fusuma*, or sliding wall panels, for this temple in *haboku* technique. Also, among his works is a portrait of his master Ikkyū.

The mounting of this scroll reinforces the elongated proportions of the painting by using very narrow strips of fabric for the side borders and wider ones at top and bottom.

9. **Portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi**
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
Inscription by Seisho Shotai
Momoyama period, dated 1599
H: 90.7 cm W: 37.8 cm 1991.61

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the man memorialized in this portrait, was an astute military strategist who rose from the ranks to be the general responsible for reunifying Japan after more than 100 years of civil war. This hanging scroll depicts him in formal white attire: starched robe, billowing trousers and even white silk socks. He wears a court hat of high rank and carries a ceremonial fan in his right hand, while a long sword is placed beside him to his left. Befitting his position, he is shown seated on a raised mat, a place of honor, in a formal reception room which is elaborately decorated. Behind him are curtains and a painted wall panel, while above him we see that the wooden architecture has been richly painted and gilded. His own taste and that of the period of his rule, the Momoyama (1573-1614) period was for the bold and the sumptuous.

The painting on the wall panel behind Hideyoshi shows a large "heroic" tree painted in ink on paper, a popular theme at the time. It suited the military taste for strength and boldness and was considered an appropriate backdrop for the men who ruled the day. In this instance, the paulonia tree, identifiable by its large leaves and upright branching flower stalks, was chosen because it was also represented on the crest of the Toyotomi family. It appears two times in the stylized form as the crest: first painted on the architecture above the figure, and then again woven into the brocade mounting around the painting. Ingeniously stylized plant and animal forms, as well as some manmade objects, were devised to be used as *mon*, the crests, or identifying emblems, of the important families of Japan.

Above the painting proper a space was reserved for an inscription by

Seishō Shōtai, Hideyoshi's Zen master and the director of the influential Zen seminary, Shōkokuji. It tells us that this painting represents Hideyoshi after his death, to be venerated as the deity (Myōjin) of the Hōkoku Shrine by order of the emperor. Such deification of emperors or influential leaders was possible in the Shintō religion.

10. **Fusuma panel**
Imperial Palace
Kyoto
© Photo by M. Schardt

Here we see a building of generous proportions but built of lightweight, impermanent materials. It is a wing of the residence in the old Imperial Palace in Kyoto, originally built in the 9th century when the capital was moved to Kyoto from Nara. Whereas most of the major buildings in and around Nara were modeled on the substantial stone and tile structures of China, the imperial residence in Kyoto reverted to the native Japanese style of architecture in which large palaces or mansions were composed of separate pavilions surrounded by wide verandas and joined by covered wooden walkways.

The wooden buildings had sliding exterior walls that could be opened to the outside. These outer walls were made of wood to provide some protection from the elements. Just inside the sliding wooden doors around the periphery of the building are *shōji* panels, constructed of translucent rice paper over lightweight wooden frames. When closed the *shōji* let in light but provide some privacy. Many of the interior walls that separated one room from another were also sliding panels that could be easily opened or closed to create larger or smaller spaces; they could even be removed easily to create a large, unobstructed room. These interior wall panels, called *fusuma*, were made of wooden frames covered with a heavy, opaque paper, usually decoratively painted.

Each type of wall panel is visible in the slide. The large, exterior wooden panels provide the outer protective shell of the house. Inside these there are the translucent *shōji*, which here have also been pushed back and so are barely visible. Inside the room, perpendicular to the open doorway, you can see a *fusuma* panel on which a painting of a crane is barely visible. A tassel is attached to the door pull. Beyond the support post, the *fusuma* are open, making one large room out of the two smaller ones. The back wall is composed of another set of *fusuma* with paintings of a large, truncated plum tree.

The sliding panels rest in tracks carved into a wooden beam set flush with the floor covering of thick grass mats called *tatami*. In Japan, the size of a room is stated in terms of the number of *tatami* mats — each approximately 3 feet by 6 feet — it can contain. The modular nature of the construction of Japanese houses give them both a general regularity and an individual flexibility.

11. **Monkeys Playing on Oak Branches**
One of a pair of hanging scrolls, ink and colors on paper
Edo period
H: 177.5 cm W: 138.4 cm 1991.62.1-2

This painting and its companion in the Packard collection are now mounted as a pair of large hanging scrolls, but were originally painted as *fusuma*. On the left side of this panel, under the foot of the monkey, a circular patch covers the hole where the door pull once was.

The panels depict monkeys playing in sturdy, large-leafed oak trees. The ink painting style reflects the Southern Song style imported from China, but here it has been reworked in accordance with the Japanese taste for bold, clear compositions and flattened layers of space. Notice the compressed space between the foreground rock, the middle ground plants and tree trunk, and the more distant rushing stream. The truncated "heroic tree" pulls the composition closer to the viewer, putting him in immediate and intimate relationship with the scene. The elements of the painting are simplified, flattened, and composed to relate to the rectangular frame of the picture surface. Space is implied by the juxtaposition of elements but we are not invited to explore or feel its depth. Our attention is always brought back to the surface of the painting itself.

Like Kaihō Yūshō (1533-1615), an individualistic painter of the 16th and 17th century Momoyama period, the painter of these *fusuma* employed ink in graded washes rather than using bold contour lines to define the forms of the rocks, trees, and leaves. A technique called *tarashikomi*, where ink is dripped onto wet ink to form an irregular, modulated surface, has been used to create the outlineless shapes of the oak leaves. Accents of crisp, dark details and texture strokes and the few colored leaves and flowers contrast with soft washes to decorative effect.

The Chinese Southern Song style, particularly that of the painter Muqi, was the inspiration for the depiction of these monkeys, as it had been for the small fan painting by Shikibu Terutada (see Slide 7). However, the furry monkeys are here painted with a fairly dry brush with separated bristles in an impressionistic style, rather than the more meticulous line-by-line style employed by Muqi and Terutada. The painting's subject matter, like its style, was imported from China. The tailless, long-limbed monkeys with round heads and small features closely gathered into the center of the white faces are native to China, not Japan. The type was popular in Japanese painting and over time certain poses were codified and recorded in pattern books. For instance, the pose of the monkey on the left is called "monkey trying to catch a reflection of the moon in water," a reference to the Zen parable concerning the human folly of mistaking illusion for the truth. The pose is here employed for its elongated compositional value; there is neither water nor moon. The artist drew on a codified repertoire of images, but

turned the image to his own use.

Besides alluding to this Zen parable, the choice of monkeys as subject matter evokes another layer of Chinese symbolism which suggests that monkeys were the guardians of horses. In this symbolic form they were an appropriate and popular theme for the castles and mansions of the military rulers and their vassals. These very panels may have decorated a room of the Toda clan castle in Nagano.

12. **The Tale of Genji Screen** (detail of two panels)
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink,colors,and gold on paper
Edo period, early 17th century
Each: H: 93.0 cm W: 271.0 cm
1991.65.1-2

The two left panels of this six-panel screen illustrate episodes from the 11th century novel, *The Tale of Genji*. Folding screens were used in Japanese houses at least since the 8th century, when they had been imported into Japan from China. The Japanese name *byobu* means "wind screen," implying they were used not only to make a section of a room private but also to shield people from drafts. The scene in the lower left shows a standing screen, open in zig-zag fashion, behind the pair of court gentlemen.

In these two panels we see a composition of small figures, sections of architecture and landscape, and a meandering pattern of embossed, puffy gold clouds. The gold clouds enable the artist to arrange the separate scenes from the novel into one large composition. The use of clouds to divide and screen off portions of a composition is a standard feature of *yamato-e*. An earlier straight-edged version of clouds was depicted in the painting of *The Appearance of Kasuga Myōjin* (see Slide 3). The lines of the architecture and the repeated landscape elements also add to the rhythmic pattern and overall unity of the composition.

In the lower left, two sections of a dwelling are joined at right angles. In the upper part, the angle of vision allows us to see into the room where the gentlemen are gathered, a room where all the sliding wall panels have been pushed aside to give the occupants an unrestricted view of the festivities in the courtyard. Painted *fusuma* are visible on the side wall and a jointed, multi-panel screen is noticeable behind them.

To reveal the activities in the women's quarters below, the artist has used the artistic convention of removing the roof, allowing us to look down on three court women. They are dressed in multiple layers of voluminous robes, accented by the lines of their long black hair streaming over them. Here, too, the wall panels have been removed so the women can view the flowering cherry tree and the *bugaku* dance performance. The split bamboo screen which usually shields the women from view has been rolled up for this special occasion. A painted two-panel screen helps separate this space from the rest of the house, as does a kind of screen made of hanging textile panels. These various screens are decorative, provide privacy, and act as buffers

against the wind.

The gentlemen and ladies are looking out onto a garden where a single cherry tree indicates the beauty of spring. A Bugaku dancer in the role of General Ling is performing near it. We can imagine the musicians seated on the other side of the striped cloth garden partition.

Already in the 12th century there were debates about acceptable iconography to illustrate the scenes of *The Tale of Genji*. Very soon after the novel was written, a repertoire of illustrations for the 54 chapters was established. From the 15th century we have a text, the *Genji Monogatari Ekotaba*, which sets forth the canon of illustrative scenes. Here it describes the proper iconography for Chapter 40, the scene illustrated at the bottom of the slide:

> 40. The Rites
>
> EKOTOBA
> At the time of the dedication of the sutras at Nijō, on about the 10th of the 3rd month, the Akashi Lady and the Lady of the Orange Blossoms watch the ceremonies through open doors at the south and east openings . . . . There are musicians and a dancer performs "General Ling." There should be many princes and high courtiers.
>
> GENJI
> The chanting went on through the night, and the drums beat intricate rhythms. As the first touches of dawn came over the sky the scene was as if made for her who so loved the spring. All across the garden cherries were a delicate veil through spring mists, and bird songs rose numberless, as if to outdo the flutes. One would have thought that the possibilities of beauty were here exhausted, and then the dancer on the stage became the handsome General Ling, and as the dance gathered momentum and the delighted onlookers stripped off multicolored robes and showered them upon him, the season and the occasion brought a yet higher access of beauty (Murase, 234-5).

13. **Sixteen Poems from the *Shin Kokin Wakashū***
Calligraphy by Hon'ami Kōetsu, 1558-1637
Papers designed by Tawaraya Sōtatsu, d. ca. 1640
Handscroll, ink and mica on paper
Edo period, early 17th century
H: 22.8 cm W: 570.0 cm 1991.64j

The decorative tendency is very strong in all Japanese art, but under some circumstances it became the primary focus of the art. The Rimpa School of the Late Momoyama and Edo (1615-1868) periods was just so focused. This section of a handscroll exhibits the collaboration between Tawaraya Sōtatsu, a master fan maker, paper decorator, and painter and Hon'ami Kōetsu, a book designer, calligrapher, potter, and sword expert. Among the objects they produced together were presentations of ancient classical literature in elegant calligraphy on scrolls of finely decorated papers . Here the scroll is composed of adjoined sheets of different colored papers, block printed with a variety of nature-based designs in lustrous mica paint. Sōtatsu enjoyed the serendipitous effects made by the materials he was using; here he exploited the way the mica paint adhered unevenly, in pools and ripples, to the hard, polished paper surface.

Kōetsu's fluid calligraphy, with its strong contrasts between full, wet, dark characters written with a brush fully charged with ink and fine-line, attenuated ones painted with a brush barely touching the paper surface, flows rhythmically across the length of the scroll. He is using the Japanese *kana* script, a form of writing devised from abbreviated Chinese characters to transcribe the syllabic nature of the Japanese language. Using the fluid and flexible *hiragana* (running) form, Kōetsu recharged his brush and began his lines at intervals that suited his aesthetic sense. For him it was a matter of form shaping content.

The poems come from an early 13th anthology called the *Shin Kokin Wakashu* (New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems). It is a monumental collection containing over 2000 poems. The 16 written here are from the section containing love poems that date from 1158-1173.

In the turbulent century of civil war which ended the Muromachi period, Japanese society went through a major upheaval. Some of the aristocratic houses fell, military strong men came and went, and there was a steady rise of a wealthy middle class of merchants. With the gradual reunification, things began to stabilize in the Momoyama period, promoting a resurgence of interest in the old cultural arts. Hon'ami Kōetsu was a leader in the move to revive the classics, producing numerous scrolls and poem cards (*shikishi*) of ancient poems. He was inspired by the scrolls, albums, and fans of the Heian period, but he has replaced the dreaminess of the Heian era with the energy and immediacy of his own day.

14. **Morning Glories** (incense wrapper)
Ogata Kōrin, 1658-1716
Hanging scroll, ink, colors, and gold on silk
Edo period, 18th century
H: 26.6 cm W: 21.1 cm 1991.79

This picture of morning glories by the masterful designer and painter Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) was painted in rich, opaque mineral pigments and ink on gold foil affixed to silk. Although now mounted as a hanging scroll, it was created as a wrapper for some precious incense, probably fine slivers of aromatic wood. The design on the wrapper would have been revealed in segments as the packet was unfolded.

These morning glories display a strong sense of design as well as a deep appreciation of the nature of the plant itself. Artistic boldness is seen in the contrasting use of mineral green for some of the leaves and black ink for others and in the way most are viewed frontally in their characteristic three-lobed shape. The veins of the leaves are indicated crisply in reserve. The solid blocks of the green and black leaves and the rich, azurite blue flowers flatly abut each other. Balancing these somewhat static formal shapes, painting in white *gofun* (ground seashell) picks out the floral divisions and recessed interiors of the flowers as well as the new buds. Also the fine deft, brushstrokes delineating the stems and tendrils of the vine capture the lively exuberance of the morning glory vine.

Kōrin appeared on the Japanese art scene about a century after Kōetsu and Sōtatsu exhibited their extraordinary genius for decorative design and daring originality. The bold, dynamic, decorative art practiced by these historically disparate artists became known as the Rimpa School, which takes its name from the second character of Kōrin's name. Kōrin's art reflects his great appreciation for the creativity of the artists before him, in particular the works of Sotatsu, coupled with a keen interest in the forms of the natural world. Images from nature found in his sketchbooks are surprisingly realistic. In translating these images to finished artworks, Kōrin's imagination produced refreshingly, even startlingly, bold creations by sharpening the angle of view, by exaggerating the asymmetry of the composition, and by using a variety of techniques in the application of pigment and ink. Even so, his designs maintain the integrity of the subject.

Like Sōtatsu, whose art he admired and began copying early in his career, Kōrin had his artistic beginnings in decorative crafts, producing lacquer and textile designs as well as painting. He came from a family of wealthy cloth merchants who provided garments for the aristocracy including the empress. In this environment, he and his artistic brother, Kenzan, were brought up surrounded by some of the most creative talent of the times. By nature, Kōrin was outgoing and extravagant. One story recounts Kōrin's attendance at a picnic with his fellow wealthy merchant friends. While his friends all arrived with beautifully painted lacquer picnic boxes, Kōrin brought out his repast wrapped in a plain large leaf. As he unfolded the leaf,

his companions saw that it had been gorgeously lined with gold foil. After his meal, Kōrin merrily tossed the leaf into the stream to float away. Kōrin squandered his inheritance in the boisterous society of the Genroku era (1688-1704) before getting down to the serious business of amassing and losing a fortune or two of his own.

Exotic incense was used in Japan since the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century. It became popular in secular life in the refined Heian court, where both men and women perfumed their garments and hair with incense. At this time an incense ceremony —a kind of guessing game — evolved which required the player not only to identify a particular fragrance but to make connections between the fragrance and literature, or to invent a poetic metaphor suggested by the incense. In the Lady Murasaki's novel, Genji was an accomplished player of this game. In the Edo period, the game continued to be popular with the wealthy merchant class as well as the aristocracy as it afforded them an opportunity not only to display their wealth with beautiful sets of equipment (including the wrappers for the different samples of incense) but also to show off their literary knowledge and skills.

When he was living at Edo (modern Tokyo), Kōrin was patronized by a very wealthy lumber merchant who loved to spend his wealth on lavish displays and brilliant art. It is suspected that this and other incense wrappers that appear to be by Kōrin's hand were produced for this merchant, Mr. Fuyuki, but there is no proof. This wrapper from the Packard collection is the only known example with Kōrin's seal; its existence adds credence to the belief that the others were also made by him.

15. **Flowering Plants and Fruits of the Four Seasons**
Watanabe Shikō, 1683-1755
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper
Edo period, 18th century
Each: H: 154.5 cm W: 352.0 cm 1991.54.1-2

The boldness, simplicity, and spaciousness of the design befit the large size of this six-panel screen, one of a pair painted in the first half of the 18th century by Watanabe Shikō, a follower of Ogata Kōrin. Shikō, who came from a wealthy family in service to the imperial regents, was a gentleman painter who produced works primarily for his friends. Although he is associated most strongly with the Rimpa school, the strong brushwork and one-sided composition reveal his earlier Kanō school training. Clear vestiges of it can be seen in the truncated trees paired on the right side of this screen and in the angular textured rocks forms. The crisply contoured stream flowing in serpentine fashion diagonally across the background is pure *yamato-e* by way of Kōrin, however.

Shikō understood how the zig-zag position of the standing screen would effect the composition. What seems like a dry, oversimplified composition of evenly spaced plant specimens when the screen is spread out flat (as it is shown in the slide) becomes a dynamic, lively garden scene when the screen

is standing with the panels partially folded in accordion fashion.

The trees and smaller plants are each clearly identifiable, arranged almost like a sampler across the picture surface. The tree on the far right with large ivy-like leaves and a spray of blue flowers is a paulonia tree, the same tree seen behind the portrait of Hideyoshi and represented in stylized form in his crest (see Slide 9). The other is a feathery-leafed *hinoki* (cypress). From left to right, the smaller plants are an azalea, large-leafed bamboo-grass, a fruiting loquat, and a sprout of young bamboo. These plants echo the traditional *yamato-e* theme of seasonal plants. The plants in this screen represent spring and summer, while the companion screen features a maple with red leaves, a pine tree, and other plants of fall and winter.

16. **West Lake in Spring**
Yosa Buson, 1716-83
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
Edo period, 18th century
H: 133.2 cm W: 62.5 cm 1991.80

This landscape of towering mountains, receding planes of water, and solid masonry architecture is an imaginative view of West Lake, a site near Hangzhou in China. This site, which figures prominently in Chinese poetry and painting, is famous for its picturesque contours, surrounding wooded mountains, arched bridges, and luxuriant willows. Another wave of Chinese influence swept into Japan in the late 17th and 18th centuries, bringing the culture of the Chinese scholar gentlemen to the shores of the Japanese islands. Some Japanese painters adopted this new style, creating paintings based on views of Chinese landscapes and using the brush and ink with light color style of the Chinese literati painters.

Using the examples of Chinese paintings he had seen and the painting manuals of Chinese brushwork that had been imported to Japan, Yosa Buson (1716-83) built up this large, complex composition in the Chinese manner. The spaciousness and grandeur of the landscape is captured by overlapping and richly textured mountain forms; the broken meandering shoreline; the diminishing sizes of trees, houses, boats, and figures; and the soft mist layers. The style of painting contrasts strongly with the Japanese painting of the *yamato-e* and Rimpa School styles with their areas of flat colors and even the Kanō School with its broad painterly brushwork in ink and colors. In the manner of Chinese literati painting, called *bunjinga* (literati painting) or *nanga* (southern painting) in Japan, the forms here are built up by the gradual application of numerous texture strokes.

Yosa Buson was reticent about his early life. It appears that he was the son of a wealthy farmer with extensive land holdings. He had a natural gift for poetry and left home at 17 to study with a disciple of the greatest *haiku* master of his age, Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694). In 1742, after his teacher died, Buson began traveling around the country, wandering through the rustic northern provinces in the footsteps of Bashō. When he started to paint he

discovered he could earn his living by selling his pictures more easily than his poetry. A self-taught painter, he dabbled in various styles, only deciding to focus on *nanga* style painting in his late 40's, when he was residing on Shikoku and had the opportunity to see many original Chinese paintings of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Inspired by the complex and calculated compositions and the richness of the brushwork, Buson learned to paint large landscapes on silk in *nanga* style. This fine example was painted near the end of this period, from about 1720. He has digested the style and imbued it with his own more fluid and evocative sensibilities.

This picture points towards the simpler, looser compositions of his old age. Combining his *haiku* poetry with simple, expressive pictures often containing lively figures, he was influential in the rise of a new kind of painting called *haiga*, or poem-paintings.

17. **West Lake in Spring** (detail)
1991.80

This detail shows more clearly the fine texture strokes and the application of color washes Buson used to create the forms of the trees and rocks. Notice the patterns of leaf strokes used to differentiate the kinds of trees on the rocky outcropping at the top. Buson was particularly taken with depicting the delicate, luminous foliage of the willows.

Buson's figures seen on the bridge and in the boat are more than just anonymous types enjoying the pleasures of drifting on West Lake with good friends and warm wine; they are delightfully drawn individual characters. If they loom a little large in proportion to the landscape, they express the very human concerns of Buson.

18. **Autumn Landscapes**
Okada Hankō, 1782-1846
One of a pair of six-panel screens, ink and colors on paper
Edo period, dated 1837
Each: H: 118.0 cm W: 284.4 cm 1991.67.1-2

Nanga style painting style was used in screen painting as well as in the more intimate scroll and album paintings. In this large six-panel screen, one of a pair entitled *Spring and Autumn Landscapes*, the ink-painted landscape is delicately washed with transparent water colors in soft red-brown tones, imparting a sense of stillness and the chill of a late autumn day.

Following the compositional pattern used on earlier Japanese landscape screens and on most bird-and-flower compositions of the Kanō school, this pair of screens opens with a large land mass on the right side of the right screen and closes with another land mass on the left side of the left screen, bracketing an open watery area in the middle. Reading this screen from right

to left, we see first the open area then gradually more trees, houses, hills, and finally the dense mountain mass and large foreground trees. The last panel suggests that the mountains continue across the blank space which holds the artist's inscription (a poem), signature, and seal. The rustic bridge, the small houses along the shore, the Chinese style mansion hidden behind the pines, and the fishermen in their boat all suggest human beings living in harmony with nature, an important theme in the Confucian philosophy which underlies the literati culture.

The large, wet ink strokes that define the foliage of the shoreline trees, and the smaller, wet, horizontal dots that define the form and texture of the rocks and mountains are in the style of the Chinese Song dynasty painter Mi Fu (1051-1107) and are categorized as "Mi dots" in the painting manuals. Other Chinese models were used for the clump of tall, thin trees on the distant hill, with their various species indicated by different kinds of dots and dashes. Hankō's larger criss-crossing pines with brush-like clumps of needles are like those of Li Cheng, who "painted pines with the sinuosity of a coiled dragon or a soaring phoenix" (Sze, 102). While Okada Hankō has used the brushstroke techniques and the carefully constructed compositions of the Chinese literati painters, the misty openness and simplicity of forms are expressions of the more emotional and intuitive quality of Japanese art.

Like most Japanese *nanga* painters, Okada Hankō was in fact a professional painter, accepting commissions and payment for his work in violation of the Chinese literati ideal. However, when he moved to Kyoto from his native Osaka, where he had been involved with his father's rice business and related service to the local daimyō, he associated with others interested in the *bunjinga* culture, discussing art, literature, and philosophy. Through these gatherings Hankō gained a deeper understanding of the painting tradition to which his father had introduced him, and also began to formulate his own ideas about art and to develop his own style.

19. **Flowers and Birds**
Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1783-1856
Six-panel screen, ink and colors on paper
Edo period, dated 1843
H: 156.3 cm W: 358.6 cm 1991.68

Yamamoto Baiitsu was influenced both by the literati and the more professional bird-and-flower painters from China. These two central panels from a large bird and flower screen display his appreciation for the richness of nature and the essence of the structure and characteristic growth patterns of the various plants. Following the Chinese style, the individual specimens are not simplified in form, but exist in their sometimes ragged patterns of growth. The whole is organized in a controlled decorative scheme of the flowers of the seasons. On this screen are represented the flowers of fall and winter. Fall flowers such as mallows and asters are presented in the panel furthest to the right (not shown). In this middle section fall and winter

overlap with blooming chrysanthemums alongside nandina, plum, bamboo and pine. Camellias and narcissus (not visible in this section), lead from winter to spring. Although these plants would not bloom together in nature, the painting's rich textural composition gives the effect of a naturalistic scene. The pairs of birds, too, are closely integrated into the picture.

It was not always clear to the Japanese which Chinese paintings that were being imported were genuine literati paintings and which were created by more professional painters in China. The distinctions were blurred in part because the Japanese were not so completely wedded to the idea of the scholar-gentleman distinct from the person who was engaged in some kind of work and who painted either for pleasure or for a living.

The Chinese painter Shen Nanpin came to Japan and painted for several years in both the literati and bird-and-flower style. He traveled to the Kyoto-Osaka region from Nagasaki, the one port site at which foreigners were allowed to dock. The bird-and-flower style, brought by Nanpin and practiced by Baiitsu, is characterized by fairly naturalistic images painted in ink and rich and harmonious color washes. These artists strove to capture the inner structure and dynamics of their subjects, not just the external likenesses. Some of the brushwork was calligraphic in nature, producing strong outlines of stems, leaves, or petals. But there was also a tendency towards finer, more descriptive delineation and the use of the boneless style. In this latter technique, flowers or leaves were formed with wet ink pushed around by the brush to create the desired shape and leaving a faint outline at the edge of the pooled pigment. Such techniques were considered to be too descriptive or too skillful for the true literati.

Baiitsu was a member of the third generation of *nanga* painters. He came from a woodcarver's family living in Nagoya, and in the milieu of craft and art, he was given painting lessons from the time he was a child. He also studied with practitioners of many schools of painting: *nanga*, Nagasaki, Kanō, and Maruyama-Shijō Schools. In his 20s he went to Kyoto where he associated primarily with the *nanga* painters. He also traveled to Edo and worked in the school of Tani Bunchō (1763-1840). The Edo environment was less idealistic and more eclectic and pragmatic. Although Baiitsu returned to Kyoto where he lived and painted for most of his life, his style reflected a variety of influences, but he became particularly well-known for his bird-and-flower paintings. He was a artist of great technical skill and refined sensitivity who captured the richness, complexity and exquisiteness of nature in his art.

20. **Various Themes**
Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891)
Album leaf, lacquer on paper
Edo-Meiji period, 19th century
H: 22.6 cm W: 18.0 cm B65 D5

This small painting, about 7 inches by 9 inches, is one of 20 in an album containing pictures of household goods, insects and plants, small animals, and folk deities. Painting in earthy shades of brown, dark green, and yellow lacquer, Zeshin here depicts a large teapot of the type that farmer's take with them to the fields at harvest time Some rice leaves are stuck into the spout and more sprigs of rice lie over the top of the pot. A small grasshopper appears to have just landed on the end of one of the rice stalks. This humble scene has been painted with loving attention to detail.

This is a leaf, or page, of an album of small paintings done by Shibata Zeshin. Albums of intimate pictures painted as a group or assembled from a collection of separate pictures or poems were created in both Japan and China. The leaves of albums usually are not bound together on one side but instead are joined end to end and folded in accordion fashion.

Zeshin was trained as a lacquer craftsman as well as a painter, and he combined the two in a unique style of painting in lacquer on paper. Although he did not invent the technique, he was the undisputed master of it. Lacquer is a stiff, sticky medium, more like Western oil paint than like the ink and colors traditionally used by Japanese painters. Obtained from the sap of the lac tree, lacquer must be painstakingly processed and applied repeatedly in very thin layers in order to properly cure, or dry. The two aspects of his training complemented each other and he became not only the most inventive lacquer designer of Edo period but also one of the era's most creative painters.

Born into a craftsman's family in Edo, Zeshin was apprenticed to a master lacquerer when he was 10 years old, but showing exceptional artistic talent, he was encouraged to study painting as well. Zeshin studied primarily in the Shijō school, which combined the poetic qualities of Yosa Buson with the realism of Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795). This latter artist had forged a style from the naturalism of some early Chinese Song and Yuan painting and the realism of Western painting that was gradually being introduced through the limited trade with the Dutch. In this tradition, Zeshin developed his talent for close observation of nature and analysis of form. His early teacher in Edo was an uninhibited artist who was open to new ideas. Fortunately for the talented and ambitious young Zeshin, he encouraged experimentation and individual creativity in his students. When Zeshin later traveled to Kyoto to study, he was exposed to *nanga* painting and culture as well as the Kano and Rimpa schools. As a wide-eyed student he took the opportunity to see and sketch many of the older works of art in this rich environment. All this exposure helped him forge a style of his own deeply rooted in native Japa-

nese aesthetics.

All his life, Zeshin was an insatiable student. He alternated periods of experimenting with lacquer techniques in his lacquer studio in Edo and traveling to see and copy old manuscripts and masterpieces found in the temples and storehouses of Kyoto and Nara. He would always sketch the countryside and things that caught his eye along the way. He was often drawn to the simple household utensils, insects, and other small creatures, and folk deities. It is not surprising to find out that in his thirties he embarked upon a serious study of *haiku* poetry, which became a lifelong interest. Like Buson nearly 100 years before, he wandered north in the footsteps of Bashō. In his art his spare imagery, attention to detail, and calculated juxtaposition of images reflects the essence of *haiku* and his instinctive grounding in this enduring facet of Japanese aesthetics.

SLIDE SCRIPT

1. Eleven-headed Kannon

This Buddhist painting shows Kannon, a loving, gentle god blessing the small, kneeling worshipper beneath him. The figure of the god is luminous. It has been painted with layers of gold paint and cut gold foil, and has a golden halo which radiates beams of golden light.

Kannon is a kind of god known as a bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who choose to remain on or near to earth to help all members of the animal kingdom, not just humans, to become enlightened. This particular Kannon has eleven heads so he is able to watch out for beings in all directions. We know this is Kannon by the little figure of Amida Buddha at the front of his crown.

Paintings that show a god descending to greet or bless the faithful are called a *raigō*. Kannon welcomes the devotee to his paradise, called the Potalaka Paradise, which is full of beautiful trees, fragrant flowers, and flowing streams.

2. Detail of 1

Zooming in on the image of Kannon we can see the beautiful detailed work that was lavished on this sacred figure. The intricate patterns of the god's robes were created in a technique known as *kirikane*, or cut gold. Sheets of gold foil were delicately cut into a variety of geometric patterns and pasted over the gold painted figure.

A thin gold scarf is loosely draped over the god's arm. It seems to become a shower of gold descending from his outstretched palm down to the figure below.

3. Appearance of Kasuga Myōjin (Departure from Kashima)

Before the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, the Japanese had their native Shintō religion. Shintō gods are called *kami*.. There are two kinds of *kami*, deified ancestors and the spirits of the land, like mountains, trees, and waterfalls.

This painting represents the deified (became a god) ancestor of the Fujiwara clan seated on a sacred stag. He is leaving the shrine in his homeland to reside in a shrine near Nara, the capitol. Behind him are the Shintō holy objects: the *sakaki* tree, five strips of specially folded paper, and a mirror. Painted on the mirror are five Buddhist deities who are incarnations of Shintō gods.

The painting style here is *yamato-e*, or Japanese painting. Notice the horizontal bands of clouds in the upper portion which partly obscure the background, the simple, sinuous line defining the contour of the land, and the asymmetrical arrangement of the figures. The figures are shown in Japanese court clothes: stiffly starched robes, billowing pants, and small black lacquered hats.

Paintings mounted as scrolls, like this, can be easily rolled up to store or carry with you. They were also used by traveling priests to propagate the cult in the outlying provinces.

4. Kasuga Honjibutsu Mandala
(Five Buddhist Avatars of the Kasuga Gods Descending over the Kasuga Shrine)

Here we have a closer look at the five Shintō gods of the Kasuga cult in their Buddhist forms. The landscape has all the elements necessary to identify the place as the Kasuga Shrine: the red gate, called a *torii*, and the rising sun are symbolic of Shintoism, the deer are emblems of the Fujiwara ancestors, and the dome of Mount Mikasa identifies the place. Often in Buddhist paintings there is a hierarchy among the gods and figures are arranged symmetrically. In this Shintō picture, the gods are shown as equals in a balanced, but not symmetrical, arrangement.

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5. Bugaku Dancers Scroll by Abe no Suehide

This image shows an old fashioned kind of dancer in his elaborate costume and mask. The mask has a long nose and bulging eyes. Its movable lower jaw has a long gray beard. Above his green hair which stands on end is the figure of a gaping dragon.

This picture is one of several on a long handscroll. A handscroll is unrolled from right to left. You look at a handscroll a little at a time. Sometimes they illustrate stories.

This scroll was a "secret scroll." Its purpose was documentary, not decorative, and so it was not shown very often. It illustrates the dances and costumes of Bugaku dance. Some artists who saw the scroll copied the images in their paintings on screens, fans, and lacquer ware. Japanese culture respects the past. Artists often looked back to older art and copy some images.

6. Bugaku Performance

Five hundred years after the scroll was painted we see that this ancient dance tradition is still continued. This outdoor performance was held in 1985.

Notice how closely the costume of the dancer recalls the one in the painting. We have the same baggy, patterned pants, red shirt, and fringed brocade vest. Tradition and preservation are very important to the Japanese, which does not mean that they were not also, always, very interested in the most up-to-date and modern forms of art and technology.

7. Monkey, attributed to Shikibu Terutada (fl. mid 16th c.)

In this fan painting, a monkey in deep concentration is lying on a rock overlooking a cascading stream. Unlike the colorful paintings we have been looking at, this picture is painted in ink of different shades of black and gray.

The Japanese had been using the Chinese brush and ink for writing and drawing. Most Japanese painting, however was sketched in ink and then carefully colored in with bright colors in the *yamato-e* or Japanese style painting. In China artists used brush and ink for painting as well as writing. Japanese artists learned this kind of painting which they called *suiboku,* or "water and ink."

This fan-shaped painting was probably never used as a fan. It has no creases where it would have been folded in accordion fashion when not in use. We know that this and other fan-shaped paintings were mounted on a screen.

8. Splashed-Ink Landscape by Soga Sōjō

This is a detail of a small landscape painting done in splashed-ink style. You can see the energetic brushwork. Firm, dark strokes and soft washes of paler wet ink suggest a dense, rocky foreground, distant mountains, and misty valleys. A few horizontal and vertical strokes indicate a building midway up the middle peak. A man and his servant sketched in dark ink make their way along a mountain path in the foreground.

This kind of painting was invented in China. It was brought to Japan with Zen Buddhism. It was practiced primarily by the temple by monk-painters. It may look easy, but it took a lot of practice with the brush and ink to paint with a sure, quick hand like this.

9. Portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi

This is a portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi who was responsible for reunifying Japan after more than 100 years of civil war. This hanging scroll was painted a year after his death. He wears formal court clothes. He has a hat of high rank and carries a ceremonial fan in his right hand. His long sword is placed to his left.

Because he is important, he is shown seated on a raised mat in a place of honor. There is also a wall panel with a painting in ink behind him. It shows a large "heroic" tree. This theme suited military taste because of its strength and boldness.

At the top of the painting there is an inscription, which tells us that Hideyoshi was to be honored as a Shintō *kami*, by order of the emperor.

10. Imperial Palace, Kyoto

Here we see a building of generous proportions but built of lightweight, impermanent materials. It is a wing of the residence in the old Imperial Palace in Kyoto. The palace was originally built in the 9th century when the capital was moved to Kyoto, but due to fire it has been rebuilt several times. This imperial residence is in the native Japanese style of architecture. In this style, the architecture of a large palace or mansion was composed of separate pavilions with wide verandas, and joined by covered wooden walkways.

The wooden buildings had sliding doors and walls that opened to the outside and wall panels that could be slid aside to enlarge interior rooms. For these wall panels, the wooden frames were covered with a heavier, opaque paper which was usually decorated, sometimes with paintings. These are called *fusuma*.

Notice that inside the room you can see a *fusuma* panel. A painting of a crane is barely visible. A tassel is attached to the door pull. The panels sit on a wooden beam with tracks carved into it that is flush with the floor covering of thick grass mats called *tatami*.

11. Monkeys Playing on Oak Branches

This large hanging scroll was originally painted as *fusuma*, those wall panels we just looked at. Can you find the circular patch that covers the hole where the door pull once was? Look under the foot of the left monkey.

The painting once decorated a large mansion of a powerful warrior. Warriors depended on horses and monkeys were considered to be the protectors of horses, so warriors liked pictures of monkeys.

The artist painted the monkeys and trees in dark and light ink and then accented the picture with gold wash and some bright mineral green pigment to make it more showy. The composition is simple and clear and the space is shallow. The monkeys and trees are right up close.

The painter of these *fusuma* used ink in graded washes rather than for strong outlines to make the forms of the rocks, trees, and leaves. An ink dripping technique made interesting irregular surfaces on the leaves.

12. *The Tale of Genji* Screen

We are looking here at two panels of a six-panel screen which illustrates episodes from the 11th century novel, *The Tale of Genji*. Screens were used to make a section of a room private and also to shield people from drafts. Look carefully at the scene in the lower left. Can see the standing screen, open in zig-zag fashion.

In the picture we see separate scenes filled with small figures painted in bright colors divided by puffy gold clouds. These are features of *yamato-e* or "Japanese painting." Other conventions of *yamato-e* include the "blown-off-roof," and the "birds' -eye-view." These make it easier for us, the viewers, to see all the activities.

The picture illustrates different scenes from a famous Japanese romantic novel called *The Tale of Genji*. In one of these scenes men and women of the court are watching a

Bugaku dance. (Remember slide 5?) You can read this episode from the story:

> The chanting went on through the night, and the drums beat intricate rhythms. As the first touches of dawn came over the sky the scene was as if made for her who so loved the spring. All across the garden cherries were a delicate veil through spring mists, and bird songs rose numberless, as if to outdo the flutes. One would have thought that the possibilities of beauty were here exhausted, and then the dancer on the stage became the handsome General Ling, and as the dance gathered momentum and the delighted onlookers stripped off multicolored robes and showered them upon him, the season and the occasion brought a yet higher access of beauty (Seidensticker, 713-15).

13. Sixteen Poems from the *Shin Kokin Wakashū*
Paper designs by Tawaraya Sōtatsu (d. ca. 1640)
Calligraphy by Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637)

This section of a long horizontal handscroll is like the page of a book. The scroll contains 16 poems from a very famous collection of poetry. They are written in beautiful handwriting on very fancy paper. It was created by two artists working together. One, Tawaraya Sōtatsu, decorated the paper with a silvery woodblock print of a full moon rising over a hill with pine trees. The other, Hon'ami Kōetsu, wrote the poem in his best calligraphy, "beautiful writing." Notice the artistic rhythm of fat and thin characters.

In the 100 years of civil war which ended the Muromachi period, society went through lots of changes. There was a steady rise of a wealthy middle class of merchants. They liked to have beautiful, traditional, but up-to-date objects like this.

14. Morning Glories (incense wrapper)
by Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716)

This picture of morning glories is by the brilliant designer and painter Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) He painted the flowers in rich,

opaque mineral colors and ink on gold foil. It was created as a wrapper for some precious incense. You would see the design in segments as you unfolded the packet.

Kōrin was a follower of the style of Sōtatsu and Kōetsu. Their decorative painting style was called Rimpa.

Of all the Rimpa painters, Kōrin was the greatest show-off. There is a story about him going on a picnic with his wealthy merchant friends. While they all arrived with the usual beautifully painted lacquer lunch boxes, Kōrin brought his lunch wrapped in a plain large leaf. This leaf, which turned out to be gorgeously lined with gold foil, he merrily tossed into the stream to float away.

15. Flowering Plants and Fruits of the Four Seasons
by Watanabe Shikō (1683-1755)

The design on this large six-panel screen is bold and simple. The composition is more dramatic when the screen is standing in a zig-zag line and the picture goes in and out. It was painted by Watanabe Shikō, a follower of Ogata Kōrin. Shikō, who came from a wealthy family that was in service to the imperial household, was a gentleman painter who produced works primarily for his friends. He is another painter of the Rimpa School, but by the strong brushwork and one-sided composition you can see that he also studied with the Kanō School.

The tree on the far right with large ivy-like leaves and a spray of blue flowers is a paulonia tree. (The same tree is seen behind the portrait of Hideyoshi and in his crest.) The Japanese like to make pictures of the plants of the four seasons. In this screen are plants of spring and summer.

16. West Lake in Spring by Yosa Buson (1716-1783)

The style of this painting contrasts with the Japanese painting of the *yamato-e* and the Rimpa school. They emphasize areas of flat colors. Here the forms are built up slowly from lots of small strokes of the brush, as in many Chinese paintings. Another wave of Chinese influence had swept into Japan in the late 17th and 18th centuries. It brought the culture of the Chinese scholar gentlemen to Japan.

The artist who painted this was Yosa Buson. He was also a poet. He traveled all around Japan writing poems and painting pictures. He studied Chinese culture and learned to paint in their style. This kind of painting is called *nanga*.

17. Detail of slide 16

In this detail you can see more clearly the fine texture strokes and the color washes. Notice the patterns of leaf strokes used to differentiate the kinds of trees on the rocky outcropping at the top. Buson was also very interested in people and usually includes them in his pictures.

Buson's figures seen on the bridge and in the boat are delightfully drawn individual characters. They loom a little large in proportion to the landscape because they express Buson's concern for human beings.

18. Autumn Landscape by Okada Hankō (1718-1846)

Nanga painting was used for screen painting as well as in the scroll and album paintings. In this large six-panel screen, the ink-painted landscape is delicately washed with transparent reddish watercolor. We sense the stillness and the chill of a late autumn day.

The landscape is more Chinese than Japanese with high mountains, a tile-roofed building, and Chinese style pine trees. The rustic bridge, the small houses along the shore, the mansion hidden behind the pines, and the fishermen in their boat all suggest human beings living in harmony with nature. This is an important theme in the Confucian philosophy followed by the scholar painters.

The artist has written a short poem and his signature on the left.

19. Flowers and Birds by Yamamoto Baiitsu (1783-1856)

Yamamoto Baiitsu painted this screen with a large bird-and-flower picture. It shows his love of nature. He observed and depicted how each different plant grows and birds stand, fly or perch. He shows their ragged patterns of growth. Like Shikō's screen painting, this one is a decorative scheme of the flowers of the seasons, but the style of painting is very different, isn't it? On this screen there are the flowers of Fall and Winter. Can you recognize chrysanthemums? Pine, plum, and bamboo are called the three friends of winter. They are often painted together

Some of the brushwork is calligraphic. There are strong outlines of stems, leaves, or petals. Baiitsu also used the boneless style, with no outlines at all. Flowers and leaves are painted only with color wash.

Baiitsu was born into a family of wood sculptors, so he was brought up with art all around. He was given painting lessons when he was a small child. Throughout his life he studied many types of painting as he traveled to different cities in Japan.

20. Farmer's Teapot by Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891)

This is a small painting, about 7 inches by 9 inches, of a large teapot — the kind that farmer's take with them to the fields when they harvest the rice. Some rice leaves are stuck into the spout and more springs of rice lie over the top of the pot. Can you find the small grasshopper that has just landed on the rice stalks?

Shibata Zeshin was a very talented artist who was trained as a lacquer craftsman as well as a painter. He painted in lacquer on paper. Lacquer is stiff and sticky like Western oil paint.

All his life, Zeshin loved to learn new things. Sometimes he experimented with lacquer techniques in his studio in Edo. Other times he traveled to see and sketch art from the past. He would also sketch the countryside and things that caught his eye along the way. He especially liked to drawn simple household utensils, insects, and other small creatures. He also liked to write short *haiku* poems.